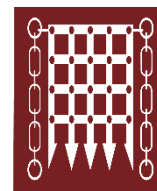


**Westminster Legal Policy Forum conference:
Next steps for tackling backlogs in the criminal courts system in England and Wales**

Timing: Morning, Thursday, 16th July 2026

*****Taking place online*****



**WESTMINSTER
LEGAL POLICY
FORUM**

Draft agenda subject to change

- 8.30 Registration
- 9.00 **Chair's opening remarks**
Senior Parliamentarian
- 9.05 **Developments in criminal courts reform - considerations for implementation and policy going forward**
Magdalena Domínguez, Senior Research Economist, Institute for Fiscal Studies
Questions and comments from the floor
- 9.30 **Court backlog and criminal justice reform - system pressures, resourcing and access to justice**
Senior speaker confirmed from **The Law Society**
- 9.40 **Assessing proposed criminal courts reform - jury trial, case allocation and court capacity**
implementation of the Courts and Tribunals Bill | case allocation, judge-only trials and Swift Courts | shifting case types between Crown Court and magistrates' courts | jury trial, fairness and perceived legitimacy | defendant rights, victim experience and vulnerable witnesses | impact of Leveson Review recommendations | court capacity, delay and case progression | public confidence and trust in the legal system | legal, constitutional and operational risks of proposed changes
Riel Karmy-Jones KC, Barrister, Red Lion Chambers; and Chair, the Criminal Bar Association of England and Wales
Penelope Gibbs, Director, Transform Justice
Rakesh Bhasin, Partner, Edwards Duthie Shamash Solicitors; and Member, Advisory Committee, LAPG
Senior representative, courts
- 10.00 Questions and comments from the floor
- 10.25 **Supporting victims in the courts system - service pressures, protection and access to justice**
Senior representative, advocacy
Senior representative, specialist services
Questions and comments from the floor
- 11.05 **Chair's closing remarks**
Senior Parliamentarian
- 11.10 Break
- 11.20 **Chair's opening remarks**
Senior Parliamentarian
- 11.25 **Courts reform in practice - case progression, judicial capacity and implementation**
Senior representative, judiciary
- 11.35 **Key considerations for delivering reform - transition, capacity and operational pressures**
alignment of reform with existing court processes and operational capacity | administrative challenges in the transition | readiness of legal professionals and support services | technology, digital case management and remote hearings | assessing court performance, case progression and wider reform outcomes | case allocation changes, sentencing powers and routes of appeal | victim support, vulnerable witnesses and case progression | recruitment and retention across the courts system | training, development and workforce resilience | efficient, secure video hearing systems and remote trial options | digital exclusion, transparency and quality of outcomes
Geoffrey Robertson, Barrister, Doughty Street Chambers
Oliver Bruff, Researcher, Ada Lovelace Institute
Senior representative, workforce
Senior representative, probation services
- 12.00 Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.30 **'Operational priorities for tackling the court backlog going forward'**
Daniel Flury, Operations Director, HM Courts and Tribunals Service
Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.55 **Chair's and Westminster Legal Policy Forum closing remarks**
Senior Parliamentarian
Thomas Howard, Westminster Legal Policy Forum